

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L COPENHAGEN 1521

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

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SUBJ: VISIT OF DANISH FOREIGN MINISTER TOJAPAN

REF: (A) TOKYO 3506, (B) COPENHAGEN 1497

1. ON MARCH 4, I HAD LENGTHY DISCUSSION WITH ERSBOLL, MFA UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS WHO ACCOMPANIED DANISH FOREIGN MINISTER K.B.ANDERSEN TO TOKYO, REGARDING THEIR MEETING WITH JAPANESE OFFICIALS. ERSBOLL CONCLUDED THAT JAPANESE ARE GENERALLY EAGER TO REDUCE THEIR LARGE TRADE SURPLUS WITH THE EC, BUT WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT EC EXPORTS TO JAPAN WILL INCREASE DRAMATICALLY IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

2. ERSBOLL CLAIMED THAT THE DANISH FOREIGN MINISTER WAS CONVINCED THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT GENUINELY DESIRES TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR TRADE SURPLUS BECAUSE THEY REALIZE THAT IF JAPAN CONTINUES TO RUN SUCH A LARGE TRADE SURPLUS, THE YEN WILL FURTHER APPRECIATE, THEREBY COMPOUNDING THE PROBLEM. MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH TOOK PLACE BETWEEN DANISH AND JAPANESE OFFICIALS
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CENTERED ON INCREASING EC EXPORTS TO JAPAN AND IDENTIFYING THE VARIOUS OBSTACLES, SUCH AS CUSTOMS RESTRICTIONS, ARCANE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS, ETC, WHICH PRESENTLY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR EC COMMODITIES TO PENETRATE THE JAPANESE MARKET.

3. THE DANES FOUND THE JAPANESE TO BE PROFOUNDLY CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST JAPANESE IMPORTS INTO THE EEC.

AGAIN AND AGAIN THE JAPANESE STRESSED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN THEIR HIGH LEVEL OF EXPORTS TO THE EC AREA AND IN RETURN FIND WAYS OF INCREASING EC EXPORTS TO JAPAN. SINCE NO IMMEDIATE SOLUTION (FOR INCREASING EC EXPORTS TO JAPAN) IS IN SIGHT, THE JAPANESE ARE AFRAID THAT THE TRADE IMBALANCE WILL GIVE RISE TO PROTECTIONIST MEASURES BY THE EC.

4. BOTH THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS USHIBA AND ECONOMIC PLANNING MINISTER MIYAZAW BELIEVE THAT JAPAN WILL HAVE A GROWTH RATE OF ABOUT SEVEN PERCENT IN 1978, LARGELY STIMULATED BY PUBLIC EXPENDITURES. HOWEVER, THE DANES CONCLUDED FROM THEIR CONVERSATION THAT THIS GROWTH RATE WOULD PRIMARILY GIVE RISE TO AN INCREASE IN RAW MATERIAL IMPORTS FROM ASIA AND WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE TRANSLATED INTO SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER IMPORTS FROM DEVELOPED AREAS SUCH AS THE EC.

5. THE DANES ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF FOREIGN AID. THE JAPANESE POINTED OUT THAT THEIR FOREIGN AID WOULD INCREASE BY 16 PERCENT THIS YEAR, WHICH THE DANES TERMED INSUFFICIENT. THE DANES THOUGHT THAT THE JAPANESE SHOULD DOUBLE THE AMOUNT OF AID THEY ARE PRESENTLY GIVING.

6. AS FOR THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH CONVERSATIONS WERE HELD, ERSBOLL SAID THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS APPEARED GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE TRADE IMBALANCE AND THAT PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA HIMSELF STRESSED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE THREE PILLARS

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ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE --THE US, JAPAN AND THE EC -- IN HELPING TO SURMOUNT THE ECONOMIC CRISIS. THE PRESIDENT OF THE JAPANESE FEDERATION OF ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS ALSO URGED THE EC TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH HIS ORGANIZATION SO THAT IT COULD HELP EC EXPORTERS OVERCOME THE MANY BARRIERS TO PENETRATING THE JAPANESE MARKET. FINALLY, THE JAPANESE PRESS WAS AT FIRST SUSPICIOUS OF THE EC AIMS AND THOUGHT THAT THE EC WISHED TO MAKE JAPAN THE SCAPEGOAT FOR THE WORLD'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS; HOPEFULLY, THESE CONCERNS WERE DISPELLED BY THE DANISH REPRESENTATIVES.

7. REGARDING THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT MEETING, ONLY ONE OF THE JAPANESE MINISTERS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT SUCH A MEETING SHOULD BE HELD ONLY IF THERE ARE GOOD CHANCES THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO CONCRETE RESULTS.

8. I UNDERSTAND K.B.ANDERSEN WILL BRIEF THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL ON MARCH 7 ON HIS RECENT TRADE DISCUSSIONS WITH JAPANESE OFFICIALS IN TOKYO.
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